

Never did the dream of brotherhood come so near of a realization as it did among those whose lives caused the heathen watchers, struck with amazement at the strange spectacle, to say, "See how those Christians love each other." Brotherhood was their watchword. Brethren their favorite and with their spirit, most natural mode of address. Persecution only riveted them more closely together. Under the very shadow of an awful death, enraptured by the story of the great love of Jesus, enthused by a passion for humanity as wide as the world, so deep that it reached even their enemies, and as abundant as human hearts filled with the love of God for lost man could know, they suffered every indignity invented by a cruel age thirsty for blood with a calmness never surpassed even by a Spartan, preached the message of Jesus, testified to a wicked world its coming doom, and loved each other, whether that other were master or slave, rich or poor, black or white, with a depth and constancy such as the world saw but once before, and that in the case of their Master, Jesus.

How fitting then that a church which contends for primitive Christianity in form and spirit should have the name—*Brethren*.

It is a pledge of fraternity, an inspiration to brotherly love, one of the things most often missed I fear, in modern Christianity. Brotherhood! the memory of an Eden lost, the dream of a fact in human society yet to be; the limit of a fatherhood divine, a vision of love as lofty and profound and all embracing as Christ; a pledge of the redemption of the race! God speed the day when it shall become a fact not only in one church but all, not only in churches, but all the world, instead of the entrancing dream left us by Christ and the early church!

Thus briefly I have tried to indicate to you for what the Brethren church stands in the world. For the Spirit of Christ and the faith, zeal, love and patience of the primitive church we contend. We believe that Christ and his apostles knew better the forms in which the Christian faith could best grow and do its work. We believe that the testimony of historical and practical exegesis, and of church history testifies that these ordinances which the Brethren observe were the forms used by the early church as means of grace to promote Christian growth. We believe that practical experience shows that these ordinances of the church of the first centuries are best adapted to the promotion of the graces of Christian character to promote which Christ commanded his disciples to observe them—triune immersion, to teach men the fatherhood of God, the brother-

hood of man with Christ, and the abiding presence of God with man thru the Holy Spirit. Feet washing, to teach Christians by symbol that Christianity is humble and loves to serve another rather than to be served. The Lord's Supper, to teach us the great doctrine of brotherly love, that in Christ Jesus is neither male nor female, bond or free, rich or poor, white, black, yellow or brown, but that all are one. The communion of the bread and wine, to teach us remembrance and practice of Christ's sacrificial death.

These we continually hold before the churches as God-given, and deem it our mission to declare that without them the church of God in its various branches is unable to do the work, and teach the life which Jesus intended they should do and teach. We believe without them they are failing to develop in their members the peculiar graces which these produce, to produce which indeed, we hold they were given by Christ.

How little is practically believed of the great doctrine of God's fatherhood is shown by men's willingness even in the church to trample a brother for gain, and by the heathenish cry of revenge, which went up not only from the lips of Christians, but even from Christian pulpits after the destruction of our battleship at Havana, that cry which disgraced every star of white, symbolic of purity, and every stripe of red, fitting symbol of forgiving and sacrificial love upon our flag; that cry which very nearly proved us a passionate, revengeful mob, instead of a nation of Christian patriots; that cry which I fain would not repeat today, "Remember the Main." It had in it a vestige of the war whoop of our Saxon ancestors beneath the dark forests of Germany. Its fierce snarl had in it a hint of the ferocity of a nature not yet subdued by the love of Christ. In its harsh tones sounded the shrill note of passion of men who believe that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin," but who in their fierce reversion to traditions of a dead past forgot that that scripture refers not to the blood of the sinner but of the Savior? And brotherhood of man? No, no, I regret to say that we are not learning it as rapidly as we ought. It is but a dream, entrancing as a dream, but too far from practical life as yet to be acted upon when the pulse of the war drum beats loud and quick in the land, when the blood-stirring shriek of the fife marks the tramp of hurrying feet bearing death to the enemy.

And how prospers that dream of poets and prophets, that vision of Tennyson's in Locksley's Hall:

"Till the wardrum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled,
In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world?"

It prospers slowly, as best it may, in the face of jingo senates and pugnacious pulpits, but far more slowly than it ought among so-called Christian nations.

Shall it be thought trivial to plead before the bar of nations calling themselves by the name of him who said, "Resist not evil," the practical obedience of this command in national life? Is it not a noble mission to herald a time when war with its horrors shall cease to be, to preach a crusade against the incarnation in the policy of nations of the most wicked and horrible and wholesale methods of killing fellow beings, to inspire fellow Christians to obey Christ's plain words on the subject of non-resistance of evil? Shall this be thought beneath the dignity of a denomination? If so, we can simply say that at one time so was the abolition of slavery and the temperance reform. But as slavery was forced to die because Christ was against it, and as the churches were forced to take a stand on the temperance question, so they shall on this question of war, because Christ is back of it all. The leaven of his teaching will grow until every church shall be leavened, until the world shall see the wickedness of it all, as the Quakers and the Brethren have already.

May God speed the day, which must come, whether it come slowly in spite of the opposition of men and nations, or swiftly by men and nations falling in line with God's eternal purposes, when the gospel, the whole gospel, shall be men's practical, work-a-day creed and rule of faith and practice, when churches shall have the graces of the church intended by Christ and taught by his ordinances, when they shall be filled with all the fulness of power, of love both to brethren and the unsaved, of faith fearless and constant, of zeal against all unrighteousness whether popular or unpopular, which made the church of the first century the mighty power it was and which shall yet make the church of Christ on earth, "A glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."

To aid in our way and strength whether it be much or little, in the accomplishment of this task—the revival of primitive Christianity at its best—the Brethren church accepts as its mission, with the prayer that humbly and lovingly it may be of some use to God and men in holding up this standard, and of assisting in its fulfillment.

"God will not call you to account for the four or five talents you have not received, but he will ask a strict account for that one which he has entrusted to you, and which is your special grace."

The great cause of our neglecting the Scriptures is not want of time, but want of heart, some idol taking the place of Christ.
From "Words and Weapons."